# The CALL of the CUMBERLANDS

by CHARLES NEVILLE BUCK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS OF SCENES IN THE PLAY



## CHAPTER I.

Close to the serried backbone of the Cumberland ridge through a sky of mountain clarity, the sun seemed hesitating before its descent to the horizon. The sugar-loaf cone that towered above a creek called Misery was pointed and edged with emerald tracery where the loftiest timber thrust up its crest plumes into the sun. On the hillsides it would be light for more than an hour yet, but below, where the waters tossed themselves along in a chorus of tiny cascades, the night was already thickening into a cathedral gloom. Down there the "furriner" would have seen only the rough course of the creek between moss-velveted and shaded bowlders of titanic proportions. The native would have recognized the country road in these tortuous twistings. A great block of sandstone, to whose summit a man standing in his saddle could scarcely reach his fingertips, towered above the stream, with a gnarled scrub oak clinging tenaciously to its apex. Loftily on both sides climbed the mountains cloaked in laurel and timber.

Suddenly the leafage was thrust aside from above by a cautious hand, and a shy, half-wild girl appeared in the opening. For an instant she halted, with her brown fingers holding back the brushwood, and raised her face as though listening. As she stood with the toes of one bare foot twisting in the gratefully cool moss she laughed with the sheer exhilaration of life and youth, and started out on the table top of the huge rock. But there she halted suddenly with a startled exclamation and drew instinctively back. What she saw might well have astonished her, for it was a thing she had never seen before and of which she had never heard. Finally, reassured by the silence, she slipped across the broad face of the flat rock for a distance of twenty-five feet and paused again to listen.

At the far edge lay a pair of saddlebags, such as form the only practical equipment for mountain travelers. Near them lay a tin box, littered with small and unfamiliar-looking tubes of soft metal, all grotesquely twisted and stained, and beside the box was a strangely shaped plaque of wood smeared with a dozen hues. That this plaque was a painter's sketching palette was a thing which she could not know, since the ways of artists had to do with a world as remote from her own as the life of the moon or stars. It was one of those vague mysteries that made up the wonderful life of "down below." Why had these things been left here in such confusion? If there was a man about who owned them he would doubtless return to claim them. She crept over, eyes and ears alert, and slipped around to the front of the queer tripod, with all her muscles poised in readiness for flight.

A half-rapturous and utterly astonished cry broke from her lips. She stared a moment, then dropped to the moss-covered rock, leaning back on her brown hands and gazing intently.

"Hit's purty!" she approved, in a low, musical murmur. "Hit's plumb dead beautiful!"

Of course it was not a finished picture—merely a study of what lay before her—but the hand that had placed these brush strokes on the academy board was the sure, deft hand of a master of landscape, who had caught the splendid spirit of the thing and fixed it immutably in true and glowing appreciation. Who he was; where he had gone; why his work stood there unfinished and abandoned, were details which for the moment this half-savage child-woman forgot to question. She was conscious only of a sense of revelation and awe. Then she saw other boards, like the one upon the easel, piled near the paint box. These were dry, and represented the work of other days; but they were all pictures of her own mountains, and in each of them, as in this one, was something that made her heart leap.

To her own people these steep hillsides and "coves" and valleys were a matter of course. In their stony soil they labored by day, and in their shadows slept when work was done. Yet someone had discovered that they held a picturesque and rugged beauty; that they were not merely steep fields where the plow was useless and the hoe must be used. She must tell Samson—Samson, whom she held in an artless exaltation of hero worship; Samson, who was so "smart" that he thought about things beyond her understanding; Samson, who could not only read and write, but speculate on problematical matters.

Suddenly she came to her feet with a swift-darting impulse of alarm. Her ear had caught a sound. She cast searching glances about her, but the tangle was empty of humanity. The water still murmured over the rocks undisturbed. There was no sign of human presence, other than herself, that her eyes could discover—and yet to her ears came the sound again, and this time more distinctly. It was the sound of a man's voice, and it was moaning as if in pain. She rose and searched vainly through the bushes of the hillside where the rock ran out from the woods. She lifted her skirts and splashed her feet in the shallow creek water, wading persistently up and down. Her shyness was forgotten. The groan was a groan of a human creature in distress, and she must find and succor the person from whom it came.

Certain sounds are baffling as to direction. A voice from overhead or broken by echoing obstacles does not readily betray its source. Finally she stood up and listened once more intently—her attitude full of tense earnestness.

"I'm shore a fool," she announced, half aloud. "I'm shore a plumb fool." Then she turned and disappeared in the deep cleft between the gigantic bowlder upon which she had been sitting and another—small only by comparison. There, ten feet down, in a narrow alley littered with ragged stones, lay the crumpled body of a man. It lay with the left arm doubled under it, and from a gash in the forehead trickled a thin stream of blood. Also, it was the body of such a man as she had not seen before.

Although from the man came a low groan mingled with his breathing, it was not such a sound as comes from fully conscious lips, but rather that of a brain dulled into coma.

Freed from her fettering excess of shyness by his condition, the girl stepped surely from foothold to foothold until she reached his side. She stood for a moment with one hand on the dripping walls of rock, looking down while her hair fell about her face. Then, dropping to her knees, she shifted the doubled body into a leaning posture, straightened the limbs, and began exploring with efficient fingers for broken bones.

She had found the left arm limp above the wrist, and her fingers had diagnosed a broken bone. But unconsciousness must have come from the blow on the head, where a bruise was already blackening, and a gash still trickled blood.

She lifted her skirt and tore a long strip of cotton from her single petticoat. Then she picked her bare-footed way swiftly to the creek bed, where she drenched the cloth for bathing and bandaging the wound. When she had done what she could by way of first aid she sat supporting the man's shoulders and shook her head dubiously.

Finally the man's lids fluttered and his lips moved. Then he opened his eyes.

"Hello!" said the stranger, vaguely. "I seem to have—" He broke off, and his lips smiled. It was a friendly, understanding smile, and the girl, fighting hard the shy impulse to drop his shoulders and flee into the kind masking of the bushes, was in a measure reassured.

A Low Groan Mingled With His Breathing.

"You must hev fell offen the rock," she enlightened.

"I think I might have fallen into worse circumstances," replied the unknown.

"I reckon you kin set up after a little."

"Yes, of course." The man suddenly realized that although he was quite comfortable as he was he could scarcely expect to remain permanently in the support of her bent arm. He attempted to prop himself on his hurt hand and relaxed with a twinge of extreme pain. The color, which had begun to creep back into his cheeks, left them again, and his lips compressed themselves tightly to bite off an exclamation of suffering.

"Thet air left arm air busted," announced the young woman, quietly. "Ye've got ter be heedful."

Had one of her own men hurt himself and behaved stoically it would have been mere matter of course; but her eyes mirrored a pleased surprise at the stranger's good-natured nod and his quiet refusal to give expression to pain. It relieved her of the necessity for contempt.

"I'm afraid," apologized the painter, "that I've been a great deal of trouble to you."

Her lips and eyes were sober as she replied.

"I reckon thet's all right."

"And what's worse, I've got to be more trouble. Did you see anything of a brown mule?"

She shook her head.

"He must have wandered off. May I ask to whom I am indebted for this first aid to the injured?"

"I don't know what ye means."

She had propped him against the rocks and sat near by, looking into his face with almost disconcerting steadiness; her solemn-pupiled eyes were unblinking, unsmiling.

"Why, I mean who are you?" he laughed.

"I hain't nobody much. I jest lives over yon."

"But," insisted the man, "surely you have a name."

She nodded.

"Hit's Sally."

"Then, Miss Sally, I want to thank you."

Once more she nodded, and, for the first time, let her eyes drop, while she sat nursing her knees. Finally she glanced up and asked with plucked-up courage:

"Stranger, what mout yore name be?"

"Lescott—George Lescott."

"How'd ye git hurt?"

He shook his head.

"I was painting—up there," he said; "and I guess I got too absorbed in the work. I stepped backward to look at the canvas and forgot where the edge was. I stepped too far."

The man rose to his feet, but he tottered and reeled against the wall of ragged stone. The blow on his head had left him faint and dizzy. He sat down again.

"I'm afraid," he ruefully admitted, "that I'm not quite ready for discharge from your hospital."

"You jest set where yer at." The girl rose and pointed up the mountainside. "I'll light out across the hill and fotch Samson an' his mule."

"Who and where is Samson?" he inquired. He realized that the bottom of the valley would shortly thicken into darkness, and that the way out, unguided, would become impossible. "It sounds like the name of a strong man."

"I means Samson South," she enlightened, as though further description of one so celebrated would be redundant. "He's over thar 'bout three-quarters."

"Three-quarters of a mile?"

She nodded. What else could three-quarters mean?

"How long will it take you?" he asked.

She deliberated. "Samson's hoein' corn in the fur hill field. He'll hev ter cotch his mule. Hit mout tek a half-hour."

"You can't do it in a half-hour, can you?"

"I'll jest take my foot in my hand, an' light out." She turned, and with a nod was gone.

At last she came to a point where a clearing rose on the mountainside above her. The forest blanket was stripped off to make way for a fenced-in and crazily tilting field of young corn. High up and beyond, close to the bald shoulders of sandstone which threw themselves against the sky, was the figure of a man. As the girl halted at the foot of the field, at, last, panting from her exertions, he was sitting on the rail fence, looking absently down on the outstretched panorama below him.

Samson South was not, strictly speaking, a man. His age was perhaps twenty. He sat loose-jointed and indolent on the top rail of the fence, his hands hanging over his knees, his hoe forgotten. Near by, propped against the rails, rested a repeating rifle, though the people would have told you that the truce in the "South-Hollman war" had been unbroken for two years, and that no clansman need in these halcyon days go armed afield.

## CHAPTER II.

Sally clambered lightly over the fence and started on the last stage of her journey, the climb across the young corn rows. It was a field stood on end, and the hoed ground was uneven; but with no seeming of weariness her red dress flashed steadfastly across the green spears, and her voice was raised to shout: "Hello, Samson!"

The young man looked up and waved a languid greeting. He did not remove his hat or descend from his place of rest, and Sally, who expected no such attention, came smilingly on. Samson was her hero. Slow of utterance and diffident with the stranger, words now came fast and fluently as she told her story of the man who lay hurt at the foot of the rock.

"Hit hain't long now tell sundown," she urged. "Hurry, Samson, an' git yore mule. I've done give him my promise ter fotch ye right straight back."

Samson took off his hat, and tossed the heavy lock upward from his forehead. His brow wrinkled with doubts.

"What sort of lookin' feller air he?"

While Sally sketched a description, the young man's doubt grew graver.

"This hain't no fit time ter be takin' in folks what we hain't acquainted with," he objected. In the mountains any time is the time to take in strangers unless there are secrets to be guarded from outside eyes.

"Why hain't it?" demanded the girl. "He's hurt. We kain't leave him layin' thar, kin we?"

Suddenly her eyes caught sight of the rifle leaning near by, and straightway they filled with apprehension. Her militant love would have turned to hate for Samson, should he have proved recreant to the mission of reprisal in which he was biding his time, yet the coming of the day when the truce must end haunted her thoughts. She came close, and her voice sank with her sinking heart.

"What air hit?" she tensely demanded. "What air hit, Samson? What fer hev ye fotched yer gun ter the field?"

The boy laughed. "Oh, hit ain't nothin' pertic'ler," he reassured. "Hit hain't nothin' fer a gal ter fret herself erbout, only I kinder suspicions strangers jest now."

"Air the truce busted?" She put the question in a tense, deep-breathed whisper, and the boy replied casually, almost indifferently.

"No, Sally, hit hain't jest ter say busted, but 'pears like hit's right smart cracked. I reckon, though," he added in half-disgust, "nothin' won't come of hit."

Somewhat reassured, she bethought herself again of her mission.

"This here furriner hain't got no harm in him, Samson," she pleaded. "He 'pears ter be more like a gal than a man. He's real puny. He's got white skin and a bow of ribbon on his neck—an' he paints pictchers."

The boy's face had been hardening with contempt as the description advanced, but at the last words a glow came to his eyes, and he demanded almost breathlessly:

"Paints pictchers? How do ye know that?"

"I seen 'em. He was paintin' one when he fell offen the rock and busted his arm. It's shore es beautiful es—" she broke off, then added with a sudden peal of laughter—"es er pictcher."

The young man slipped down from the fence, and reached for the rifle. The hoe he left where it stood.

"I'll git the nag," he announced briefly, and swung off without further parley toward the curling spiral of smoke that marked a cabin a quarter of a mile below. Ten minutes later his bare feet swung against the ribs of a gray mule and his rifle lay balanced across the unsaddled withers. Sally sat mountain fashion behind him, facing straight to the side.

So they came along the creek bed and into the sight of the man who still sat propped against the mossy rock. As Lescott looked up he closed the case of his watch and put it back into his pocket with a smile.

"Snappy work, that!" he called out. "Just thirty-three minutes. I didn't believe it could be done."

Samson's face was masklike, but as he surveyed the foreigner, only the ingrained dictates of the country's hospitable code kept out of his eyes a gleam of scorn for this frail member of a sex which should be stalwart.

"Howdy?" he said. Then he added suspiciously: "What mout yer business be in these parts, stranger?"

Lescott gave the Odyssey of his wanderings, since he had rented a mule at Hixon and ridden through the country, sketching where the mood prompted and sleeping wherever he found a hospitable roof at the coming of the evening.

"Ye come from over on Cripple-shin?" The boy flashed the question with a sudden hardening of the voice, and, when he was affirmatively answered, his eyes contracted and bored searchingly into the stranger's face.

"Where'd ye put up last night?"

"Red Bill Hollman's house, at the mouth of Meeting House fork; do you know the place?"

Samson's reply was curt.

"I knows hit all right."

There was a moment's pause—rather an awkward pause. Lescott's mind began piecing together fragments of conversation he had heard, until he had assembled a sort of mental jigsaw puzzle.

The South-Hollman feud had been mentioned by the more talkative of his informers, and carefully tabooed by others—notable among them his host of last night. It now dawned on him that he was crossing the boundary and coming as the late guest of a Hollman to ask the hospitality of a South.

"I didn't know whose house it was," he hastened to explain, "until I was benighted and asked for lodging. They were very kind to me. I'd never seen them before. I'm a stranger hereabouts."

Samson only nodded. If the explanation failed to satisfy him, it at least seemed to do so.

"I reckon ye'd better let me holp ye up on thet old mule," he said; "hit's a-comin' on ter be night."

With the mountaineer's aid, Lescott clambered astrid the mount, then he turned dubiously.

"I'm sorry to trouble you," he ventured, "but I have a paint box and some materials up there. If you'll bring them down here, I'll show you how to pack the easel, and, by the way," he anxiously added, "please to handle that fresh canvas carefully—by the edge—it's not dry yet."

He had anticipated impatient contempt for his artist's impedimenta, but to his surprise the mountain boy climbed the rock and halted before the sketch with a face that slowly softened to an expression of amazed admiration. Finally he took up the square of academy board with a tender care of which his rough hands would have seemed incapable and stood stock still, presenting an anomalous figure in his rough clothes as his eyes grew almost idolatrous. Then he brought the landscape over to its creator, and, though no word was spoken, there flashed between the eyes of the artist, whose signature gave to a canvas the value of a precious stone, and the jeans-clad boy whose destiny was that of the vendetta, a subtle, wordless message. It was the countersign of brothers-in-blood who recognize in each other the bond of a mutual passion.

The boy and the girl, under Lescott's direction, packed the outfit and stored the canvas in the protecting top of the box. Then, while Sally turned and strode down creek in search of Lescott's lost mount, the two men rode upstream in silence. Finally Samson spoke slowly and diffidently.

"Stranger," he ventured, "ef hit hain't askin' too much, will ye let me see ye paint one of them things?"

"Gladly," was the prompt reply.

Then the boy added covertly:

"Don't say nothin' erbout hit ter none of these folks. They'd devil me."

The dusk was falling now, and the hollows choking with murk.

"We're nigh home now," said Samson at the end of some minutes' silent plodding. "Hit's right beyond thet thar bend."

Then they rounded a point of timber and came upon a small party of men whose attitudes even in the dimming light conveyed a subtle suggestion of portent.

"Thet you, Samson?" called an old man's voice, which was still very deep and powerful.

"Hello, Unc' Spencer!" replied the boy.

Then followed a silence unbroken until the mule reached the group, revealing that besides the boy another man—and a strange man—had joined their number.

"Evenin', stranger," they greeted him, gravely; then again they fell silent, and in their silence was evident constraint.

"This hyar man's a furriner," announced Samson, briefly. "He fell

Tamarack South.

offen a rock an' got hurt. I 'lowed I'd fotch him home ter stay all night."

The elderly man who had hailed the boy nodded, but with an evident annoyance. It seemed that to him the others deferred as to a commanding officer. The cortege remounted and rode slowly toward the house. At last the elderly man came alongside the mule and inquired:

"Samson, where was ye last night?"

"Thet's my business."

"Mebbe hit ain't." The old mountaineer spoke with no resentment, but deep gravity. "We've been powerful oneasy erbout ye. Hev ye heered the news?"

"What news?" The boy put the question noncommittally.

"Jesse Purvy was shot this morning."

The boy vouchsafed no reply.

"The mail rider done told hit. . . . Somebody shot five shoots from the laurel. . . . Purvey hain't died yit. . . . Some says as how his folks has sent ter Lexington fer bloodhounds."

The boy's eyes began to smolder hatefully.

"I reckon," he spoke slowly, "he didn't git shot none too soon."

"Samson!" The old man's voice had the ring of determined authority. "When I dies ye'll be the head of the Souths, but so long es I'm a-runnin' this byar fam'ly I keeps my word ter friend an' foe alike. I reckon Jesse Purvy knows who got yore pap, but up till now no South hain't never busted no truce."

The boy's voice dropped its softness and took on a shrill crescendo of excitement as he flashed out his retort.

"Who said a South has done busted the truce this time?"

Old Spicer South gazed searchingly at his nephew.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Queerest Dance in the World.

The Godavari dance of the malayers, or drummers, of Malabar is a very popular function when the native farmers are taking their ease after the hard work of harvest. The principal character is a weird figure supposed to represent the sacred cow of the gods, Kamachenu. A small boy carries this about while the other performers, decked out in primitive fashion with painted bodies and hideous masks, go through a weird dance, accompanied by much drum beating and singing. Wherever it goes the cow is supposed to shower blessings and prosperity, and so, ostensibly to please the animal, but in reality to satisfy the dancers, presents of money, paddy or rice are given to the performers. This custom has been in existence from time immemorial and is likely to continue as long as agriculture endures among the Hindus of Malabar.—Wide World Magazine.

### What Attracted Him.

A mother took her four-year-old son to a restaurant for his first luncheon outside of the nursery at home. He behaved with perfect propriety, and watched the elaborate service with keen interest. When the finger bowls were placed on the table, he noticed the square white mint on the plate at the side of the bowl, and exclaimed: "Oh, mother, look at the cunning little cakes of soap he brought us!"—Harper's Magazine.

## WORTHY OF HIGH COMMAND

President Wilson's Promotions of Army Men Will Have Approval of the Voters.

President Wilson and Secretary Garrison continue to carry out their excellent policy of promoting army officers of merit. Recently there were announced the selections of Brig. Gens. Frederick Funston, Hugh L. Scott and Tasker H. Bliss for the one existing and the two coming vacancies among the major generals; of General Scott as chief of staff, in succession to General Wotherspoon, retired, and of Cols. Henry A. Greene, William A. Mann of the infantry, and Col. Frederick S. Strong of the coast artillery, to be brigadier generals. These are all worthy officers whose fitness can hardly be questioned. General Funston has not, of course, the standing of a regularly trained officer, but his service at Vera Cruz, with the fact that he has served 13 years acceptably as brigadier general, and has for years been the senior in rank in that grade, makes his advancement altogether justifiable. The army will, we believe, agree with us in asserting that it has had under no other president so square a deal in the matter of the distribution of high honors. The Wilson custom has been to promote those colonels who are recommended by a majority of the existing generals, and it would be hard to devise a fairer method. For one thing, it wholly eliminates political pressure. If General Scott's rise to the position of chief of staff has been rapid, it is merited, for he has served long with troops and in the field, and has in addition acquired certain lore about our Indians, for instance, which is unequaled by any other officer. Best of all is the fact that President Wilson absolutely refuses to countenance the promotion of any officers as generals who have not served acceptably as colonels.

## LEADERS MUST TAKE NOTE

Democratic Party Will Certainly Face a United Opposition Two Years Hence.

The Democratic party must make up its mind to face a united opposition in 1916. The Progressives are petering out. In two years more they will have vanished altogether, and the old guard will have reformed its lines for another assault on the citadels of office and power.

As if to rub in the lesson of the election, a group of old-time Republicans, turned out or endangered by the revolt of 1912, have won back to power in 1914. "Uncle Joe" Cannon has come back to congress from the Eighteenth district of Illinois. William H. McKinley has come back from the Nineteenth of the same state. Penrose wins an easy victory in Pennsylvania, Brandegee a harder fought one in Connecticut.

Clearly, the enthusiastic souls who followed the Bull Moose call are limping back to the old fold. Most of them have got home already—as some Democratic candidates learned to their cost. All save an irreconcilable few will be back by election time two years hence.

### Too Much Timidity Now.

What is needed is for everybody to throw aside the blanket of hard times and to gain courage and gather fortitude and to get together and make things go. There is absolutely no collusion of capital to slacken industry—this is utter nonsense. There is, however, too much timidity upon the part of the banks to further industrial undertakings and to give support to substantial industrial corporations. Conservatism is a fine virtue, but it is a fearful vice. There is much depression throughout the country because of the prevalence of this vice. The country talks radicalism in policies and acts ultraconservative in its business.

There is too much timidity among men of enterprise. They are fearful of the future, when if they would "take no anxious thought of the morrow" they would be ready to grasp the opportunities of the present.

### Same Old Balderdash.

After pointing out how "Nature is helping to bring back good times," the New York Tribune says: "The administration did not act as Providence's advance agent in these recoveries, nor could upsetting legislation retard them." It is only when there is a Republican administration in Washington that nature performs its political duties properly, and the rain falls and sun shines and bountiful crops ripen in obedience to partisan legislation.—New York World.

### Next Presidential Campaign.

Since the Republicans made larger gains and polled a larger total vote than it was thought they would be able to do, they are naturally beginning to plan for a vigorous presidential campaign in 1916. Democrats must remember that.

### Need for Harmony.

Never, perhaps, in the history of the party has Republican presidential timber been so scarce. As a congressman, Uncle Joe Cannon was able to "come back," and, but for his advanced age, he would make a lively candidate for president. When the time comes, however, the Republicans will probably put up a very respectable ticket. But if the Democrats continue in harmony they should be able to retain power in Washington for many years to come. Harmony must be maintained.